

An Act of Elf-Loathing  
A Three Episode Miniseries

By Shane Joseph



## EPISODE ONE:

We open on a nervous college student, Eric Hawkins. He gets dressed in front of a mirror in his dorm room, puts on a nice suit, then runs a comb through his hair and fixes his tie. He goes over to his desk, organizes a folder of papers, and puts on a nice watch. He does one last look in the mirror, indecisive about which way to part his hair, does it the opposite way, then returns it to its original position. He exits his dorm and onto the city streets, walking at a brisk pace, towards the elevated train. He rides a few stops before getting off, and stands in front of a brick building with a hanging sign reading "Feldman Law Offices." He enters confidently, but by the time he gets to the top of the stairs, he is nervous.

He enters the office and introduces himself as the new intern to the secretary, who gestures for him to wait in front of James' office door. Eric knocks, and enters to find James sitting upside down behind his desk using his computer to play video games. He sits himself up and introduces himself to Eric. James struggles to find things to do with Eric, and then the secretary lets them know they have a client. James thinks it will be an educational experience, and lets Eric sit in on the call.

That's when they get the call from Holly Jingle, confession to the murder of Santa. She begs him to take the case, and James almost doesn't take it, but after Holly offers him a large sum of money, he accepts. Eric is mortified, but doesn't say anything because he needs the college credit. They get a chartered flight to the north pole, and go to the North Pole Correctional Facility to meet Holly.

## EPISODE TWO:

The lawyers go to the toy factory to meet with the elf foreman and other employees to try and build a case around the poor working conditions of workers. They all testify that Santa is a terrible boss, and is negligent towards the worker. They are working with old, unreliable tools, and are in a hot metal building with North Pole Security breathing down their necks and making sure they stay on schedule. In the middle of the factory tour, a breaking news report lights up the TVs.

Mrs. Claus makes a public statement to the press saying that Santa is dead, and Holly did it. The facility breaks out into a riot, and as James goes to leave, he realizes that Eric has gone missing amidst the chaos. One of the workers tells him he saw Eric being taken by some guy, and James follows his trail. He arrives at a broken down log cabin on the outskirts of town, and meets Eric's kidnapper, the elusive Jack Frost, who may just be the lawyers' key witness. Before Jack can divulge key information, they are interrupted by a surprise attack.

## EPISODE THREE:

The lawyers wake up in the North Pole Correctional Facility and have to explain to the police that they had nothing to do with the factory riot, and they learn exactly who Jack Frost really is.

The lawyers then prepare for the big trial, and prep witnesses like the foreman, sleigh mechanic, and Jack Frost. They go up against prosecutor Mara Stone and Judge Jeb "Merciless" Mercer, the North Pole's toughest judge. Prosecution witnesses include reindeer handler Randy Duncie, a slew of mall Santas, and Ebenezer Scrooge testifying about how Christmas turned his life around. The case isn't looking good for the lawyers, but when Jack Frost gets up and exposes Santa's bad side, including his gambling addiction and sleazy nature. They are able to turn the case around, and get Holly off with some community service, and James is named the rightful owner of the North Pole by the Elf Workers Guild.

Character name: James Feldman

Age: 33

Gender: Male

Current residence: Canada

Hair color: Brown

Personality (I/E): Extrovert

Behavioral traits and background: Bit of a slacker, didn't really want to become a lawyer, but can't be bothered to find another job. Been at the job for about 10 years. Smooth talker.

Goals: Make the most amount of money possible by doing the least amount of work.

A secret: The only reason he got any jobs as a lawyer was because a local judge accidentally shot him at a gun range.

Quirks: Never actually got his driver's license, and uses a fake one. Loves word search puzzles.

Character name: Eric Hawkins

Age: 20

Gender: Male

Current residence: University of Canada Law School

Hair color: Blond

Personality (I/E): Introvert

Behavioral traits and background: Straight laced, serious about his degree. Comes from a family in the legal system, succeeding means a lot to him. President of the debate team. Takes school seriously, but is not a nerd.

Goals: Become a successful lawyer at his own firm.

A secret: Has never had actual experience in a courtroom. Also a boy band fan.

Quirks: He wears non prescription glasses because he wants to look smarter despite not needing them.

Character name: Holly Jingle

Age: 480

Gender: Female

Current residence: North Pole Penitentiary

Hair color: Red

Personality (I/E): Extrovert

Behavioral traits and background: Outspoken, passionate about making toys. Stubborn, easily provoked.

Goals: Win the case and improve elf working conditions.

A secret: Hates the cold.

Quirks: Vegetarian due to a troubling rumor about reindeer hamburgers.

AN ACT OF ELF-LOATHING  
EPISODE ONE: TIS THE SEASON

Written by  
Shane Joseph

INT. COLLEGE DORM - MORNING

We open on a nervous college student, ERIC HAWKINS (20). He gets dressed in front of a mirror in his dorm room, puts on a nice suit, then runs a comb through his hair and fixes his tie. He goes over to his desk, organizes a folder of papers, and puts on a nice watch. He does one last look in the mirror, indecisive about which way to part his hair, does it the opposite way, then returns it to its original position.

EXT. CITY STREET

He exits his dorm and onto the city streets, walking at a brisk pace, towards the elevated train. He rides a few stops before getting off, and stands in front of a brick building with a sign that reads "Dog Gym - Now Offering Pup-lates" and a small sign hanging below that, reading "Feldman Law Offices Upstairs". He enters confidently, but by the time he gets to the top of the stairs, he is nervous.

INT. FELDMAN LAW OFFICES

Eric knocks on the door, and enters the office. It's a small space, with a secretary, DENISE (30s), seated at the front desk.

ERIC

Hi there, I'm Eric. Eric Hawkins.  
I'm here to see James- I mean Mr.  
Feldman.

DENISE

Oh, you must be the intern. James  
is very excited to have you here,  
he hasn't had an intern yet.

ERIC

Really? How come, has he not needed  
any help?

DENISE

No, he just got his own office.

ERIC

Oh, okay.

DENISE

You can go ahead and sit outside  
his office. He's very busy.

Eric goes over to take a seat and hears JAMES through the door.

JAMES  
(through door)  
Come on! You've gotta be kidding  
me. You're *dead*. I'm coming after  
you. *No mercy!*

DENISE  
(calling out)  
James! Eric is here!

JAMES  
The delivery guy? I ordered chicken  
wings an hour ago!

DENISE  
No, you already ate those,  
remember? No, it's the intern.

JAMES  
Oh, send him in!

INT. JAMES' OFFICE

Eric enters to find JAMES FELDMAN (33) sitting upside down  
behind his desk, using his computer as a monitor to play  
video games.

ERIC  
Hi Mr. Feldman, my name is Eric  
Hawkins. I'm going to be your  
intern for this semester.

James doesn't take his eyes off the screen.

JAMES  
Eric! Pleasure to meet you. As you  
can see, we're very busy here.

ERIC  
Er, right...

JAMES  
I'm kidding of course. We haven't  
had a client in a few weeks. I only  
moved here from the states last  
month. Had kind of an incident back  
stateside- doesn't matter. Either  
way, happy to have some help around  
the office.

ERIC

Absolutely. Is there anything I can get started on now? Researching cases? Writing legal briefs?

JAMES

I'd really like a refill if you can get me one.

ERIC

Sure, a refill on what? Fax paper? Index cards?

JAMES

Nope. A refill on the Doctor.

ERIC

I'm sorry?

James gestures to a large gallon jug of Diet Dr. Pepper.

JAMES

They don't have the Diet version up here, so I have to import it by the tank from the US. The tap is hooked up to it, you can just do it there.

ERIC

Sure thing, Mr. Feldman.

JAMES

Please, call me James. We're all friends here.

James still does not take his eyes off the screen, and Eric walks over to the faucet with the gallon and turns the handle, and sure enough, syrupy soda pours out into the gallon jug.

ERIC

So how long have you been practicing law?

JAMES

Almost ten years now. I've been around the block with cases, some civil, some criminal. Sort of a James of all trades.

ERIC

Uh huh. Denise said you just got this office, where were you working from before?



JAMES

Back home I was part of this big firm, but I didn't like the whole corporate vibe. So when I had to move up here I figured I would get my own place.

ERIC

Interesting, do you have a mission statement or any sort of motto?

JAMES

Hmm, I've never really thought about it before. I guess, "make the most amount of money possible by doing the least amount of work."

Eric laughs. James looks up from the game for the first time.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I wasn't joking.

ERIC

I am so sorry.

JAMES

Eh, no worries. I'm not the most conventional guy, I get that. I'm just sort of waiting for one big case to put me on the map up here. What about you? What's your 'motto'?

Eric is surprised, he wasn't expecting to actually be respected as an intern.

ERIC

Well, my whole family is into the law business, I'll probably end up working at the family office.

JAMES

Do you not actually want to work there?

ERIC

Well, ideally I'd like to have my own office-

They are interrupted by Denise, who pops her head into the office.

DENISE

James, potential client on line 1.

JAMES  
We have multiple lines?

DENISE  
James. Potential *client*.

He finally turns off the game, and unplugs the controller.

JAMES  
Alright, alright. Send it through.

ERIC  
Do you want me to take notes on the call?

JAMES  
No, that's fine. Probably won't be anything serious. You can listen in though, might be a good learning experience.

Eric sits at the desk next to James. James picks up the phone and puts it on speaker mode.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Hello, this is James Feldman.

HOLLY  
(on phone)  
James? My name is Holly Jingle. I'm calling from the North Pole.

JAMES  
Yeah, sure, and I'm the Queen of England. Have a good day, Holly Jingle.

James makes a move to hang up the phone.

HOLLY  
Wait, wait! I'm serious. And I can pay. A large amount of money. In advance.

JAMES  
Okay... what can I help you with?

HOLLY  
I murdered Santa Claus.

James and Eric slowly turn and look at each other.

JAMES  
Please hold.

The TITLE SEQUENCE for the show plays.

CUT TO:

GRAPHIC- "ONE WEEK LATER"

EXT. CANADA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

Eric stands with his suitcase in front of the airport, rocking back and forth nervously. He is carrying a jacket and scarf, and talking to himself.

ERIC

I can't believe I'm here. I can *not* believe I'm here. This is crazy. What am I doing? All for some stupid college credit. I'm not even getting paid!

A taxi cab pulls up outside the airport, and James gets out in a short sleeved collared shirt, adjusting a clip-on tie.

JAMES

Sorry I'm a little late, kid. I forgot to pack last night, so I had to throw a bag together.

ERIC

Where is all your winter stuff?

JAMES

Are you okay, Eric? It's August. It's summer!

ERIC

It's summer here, yes. However, counterpoint, we are going to the *North Pole*.

JAMES

Oh, right. I'm sure they'll have a Walmart or something once we get there, right?

ERIC

Oh my god.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC

We see an establishing shot of the airplane taking off from the runway and into the sky.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Eric and James are sitting next to each other in the plane. Eric is flipping through various books and manila folders, James has headphones in and is watching cartoons. Eric taps James on the shoulder, and James turns to him.

JAMES  
(yelling)  
WHAT'S UP?

ERIC  
Ow! Take the headphones out.

James takes the headphones out.

JAMES  
Oh, sorry. What's up?

ERIC  
Don't you think we should be going over the case?

JAMES  
I mean, I think we basically got it down. Well, everything we can anyway. Holly wants to tell us most of the details in person. And don't worry, I confirmed it's real. She's registered with the Elf Workers Guild.

ERIC  
I thought the elves mainly kept to themselves.

JAMES  
They do, but a few years ago, the UN legally required them to be counted on the census. It was a whole hubbub, they almost delayed Christmas because there was a strike.

ERIC  
I still can't believe we're actually doing this.  
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

But I talked to my advisor, and this also technically fills my study abroad requirement.

JAMES

See? It's going to be fun.

ERIC

We'll see. Arguing self defense is always tricky though, right?

JAMES

Oh it's not going to be easy. But if you saw the size of the check these Elf Worker people are willing to cut me... well, *anyone* would take this case. I'm just glad the press hasn't gotten word of this yet. This thing's going to be a media frenzy. Bigger than OJ.

ERIC

That's reassuring.

JAMES

I still can't believe she chose *me* to represent her.

ERIC

Yeah, I was wondering about that actually. Why you? No offense.

JAMES

None taken. Apparently she just started cold calling defense attorneys closest to the North Pole. She said no one would take her seriously, thought it was a prank call.

ERIC

I guess I don't blame them. But we were the closest ones?

JAMES

I don't know, I've learned it's best not to question these things too much.

ERIC

Fair enough.

James goes back to his cartoons, and Eric returns to reading over the files, before looking over at James, then closing the folder and looks out the window.

EXT. NORTH POLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

James and Eric exit the jetway and into the North Pole International Airport. Unlike the stereotypical whimsy of what you would picture from the North Pole, this is an industrial airport. Businesspeople shuffle about the hallways, elves included, and there are advertisements for sleigh grease, candy cane fence repair, and gingerbread insulation around the terminal.

ERIC

Wow, this is... not what I expected.

JAMES

Crazy to think that their whole industry is about to come crashing down once they realize Santa is-

ERIC

Shhhh! Are you crazy? Let's not try to make a scene, we just got here.

As Eric and James walk out of the airport, multiple businessmen walk by, talking aggressively into their bluetooth devices.

BUSINESSMAN

I'm sorry sir, but it's too late! We tried selling you reindeer insurance six months ago. I'm sorry about your grandma, but there's nothing we can do for you now...

BUSINESSMAN 2

Ma'am, we cannot be held responsible for Frosty's actions. Yes, I'm aware that "snow" has different meanings, but I'm sure he was completely unaware of what he was offering your children.

BUSINESSMAN 3

Matt, listen to me. Kringlecoin is going to the moon. If you invest now, your children will never have to work a day in their lives. Can I count you in for 10,000 shares?

James and Eric exit through the sliding doors and into the snowy city of the North Pole. Once a picturesque postcard-like village, but no more. Skyscrapers rise above the now rundown cookie shops, and potholes riddle the gingerbread-paved streets, filled with icing as cement.

JAMES

(shivering)

Wow, you were right, Eric. It's a bit chilly.

ERIC

Here, I brought an extra jacket.

Eric puts down his bag and unzips it, giving James his jacket. It's comically small on James, but he wears it anyway. As he is admiring the jacket, someone on a reindeer gallops up and uses a long candy cane to snatch the suitcase before flying away into the sky.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hey! That's all my stuff!

JAMES

You gotta keep one hand on your luggage, kid. Always. From what I've heard, a city whose major industry is only functional one month out of the year doesn't find very productive things to do with the other eleven.

ERIC

My wallet was in there!

JAMES

I'll get you back once we meet with the Elf Workers Guild. They're giving me an advance on my fees.

ERIC

And what about all my clothes?

JAMES

I'm sure we'll find some stuff in the lost and found for you once we get to the prison.

ERIC

Great. Awesome. My first real job I'll be walking around in an inmate's discarded clothes.

JAMES

I can offer you this jacket.

ERIC

That's my- never mind. Where are we going first?

JAMES

We should probably check into the hotel so we can put our bags away- well, *my* bag. We're not meeting Holly until tomorrow, so we can get some sleep beforehand. We'll have to get a ride.

James uses his phone to call them a cab, and a beat-up sleigh pulls up in front of them moments later. The driver is a middle-aged, slightly overweight mustachioed man named PHIL (50s). He grabs James' bag and throws it into the trunk of the sleigh, they get into the back seat, and start driving on the road.

INT. SLEIGH

ERIC

So, does this sleigh fly?

PHIL

Fly? Maybe the higher end models, but not this thing. I don't got that kinda money. We mostly just hover, and I'm lucky if I can even get it to do that anymore. Where are you guys headed?

JAMES

The One Season hotel, near the industrial district.

PHIL

Industrial district, huh? Be careful out there, I hear the elves get real seedy during the summer months. It's the height of toy production season, and once the weather gets above freezing, the heat starts to get to those guys. Keep a hand on your luggage, if you know what I mean.

ERIC

Yeah, unfortunately I do.



Phil takes out a candy cane cigar and starts smoking it as they pass through the downtown area of the North Pole.

JAMES  
Oh, look, kid.

James points out the window at the North Pole County Courthouse.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
I never thought I'd actually get to argue a case here, most lawyers never even see it in person.

PHIL  
You guys are lawyers?

JAMES  
Yeah, well, I am anyway. This here is my intern. Why, do you need one?

Eric elbows James.

PHIL  
Maybe, I don't have a court date yet, but I got busted for a DUI last month. I mean, it was one bottle of eggnog, these cops take things way too serious up here.

ERIC  
Well, we're working on another case right now, but we'll have to get back to you on that.

PHIL  
Great! I'm just hoping I don't get Merciless Mercer.

JAMES  
I'm sorry, who?

PHIL  
Judge Mercer. All the guys around here call him Merciless Mercer. He's an old-fashioned guy, his big thing is that he wants to "preserve the spirit of Christmas" or whatever. If your case has anything to do with the sanctity of the holiday, you're pretty much screwed.

ERIC

Oh. Great.

The sleigh pulls up in front of the One Season Hotel.

EXT. ONE SEASON HOTEL

PHIL

Here we are, boys. Good luck with whatever you're doing here, and let me know if you can help me with that DUI!

ERIC

Always a great thing to hear from your driver.

Eric and Phil exit, the sleigh backfires before peeling out, skidding on the icy roads. They head into the hotel lobby, and meet with the woman at the front desk, MERRY (400s).

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

JAMES

Hi, my name is James Feldman. I booked one of the human sized rooms a few days back.

MERRY

Right this way.

Merry grabs a key from behind the desk, and suddenly shrinks. Or, at least appears to. Merry is revealed to be an elf, she was standing on a step stool in order to meet James' eye line. They follow her down a low-ceilinged hallway and into a rickety elevator and take it up to the fourth floor, where their room is located. The ceiling is now human sized, and she points them to their room.

JAMES

Thank you very much.

MERRY

Continental breakfast starts at 6AM until 10AM.

ERIC

Ooh, maybe we'll get to try some exotic foods.

MERRY

This month's continent is Canada.

Merry walks back down the hallway and into the elevator.

ERIC

But Canada isn't even a- never  
mind.

They enter the room, and it's clear that this was previously an elf sized room. The two beds are made up of four smaller beds pushed together, and the desk is just a slab of hardened gingerbread.

JAMES

Well, this is cozy.

ERIC

That's one word for it. Let's just  
try and get some rest.

Eric lays in the bed, trying to push the four beds together to be comfortable while James goes into the bathroom to change into his pajamas. He comes back into the main room, and messes around with the window shades.

JAMES

Man, it's kind of bright in here.

ERIC

Oh no.

JAMES

What?

ERIC

I can't believe I forgot. This is  
the North Pole. The sun is up for  
24 hours. There's no way I can  
sleep like this.

JAMES

Well, get used to it. We might be  
here a while.

ERIC

You really think it could be a long  
time?

JAMES

Who knows. One thing is for sure,  
though. Once the press finds out  
that Santa is dead, it will be mass  
hysteria. Worldwide. Things will  
start moving super fast, the public  
will pressure for a trial as soon  
as possible.

ERIC

Then I guess we have to do as much  
work as we can before that happens.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The hotel alarm clock goes off, it's a strange combination of  
a typical alarm sound and holiday bells. James sits up out of  
bed and shuts off the noise, yawning.

JAMES

Oh, wow, I cannot believe how good  
I slept. Those beds are extremely  
comfortable. How about you, Eric?  
Sleep at all?

Eric is laying face up on his back, eyes wide open, staring  
at the ceiling.

ERIC

Not. At. All.

JAMES

Well I'm sure after a busy day  
you'll be more tired.

ERIC

The issue isn't that I'm not tired,  
I'm extremely tired. I just find it  
hard to rest with harsh white light  
streaming in at all times.

JAMES

Your eyes will adjust soon enough.

ERIC

I doubt it.

James gets up and enters the bathroom, turns on the shower  
water, and then yelps and comes running out.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What? What is it?

JAMES

The- the water!

ERIC

What about it?

Eric walks in and puts a hand under the water.

JAMES

See?!

ERIC

It's freezing!

JAMES

I'll call the front desk.

ERIC

Please do.

James picks up the hotel phone and makes a call.

JAMES

Hello, this is James Feldman, I'm in room 418. Uh, our water seems to be extremely cold, and I'm hoping we could get that fixed.

(pause)

Uh huh.

(pause)

Uh huh.

(pause)

I see. Thank you.

ERIC

Well?

JAMES

They said 45 degrees is the standard temperature, we'll have to leave the water running for an hour and a half to get it above 50.

ERIC

This is a nightmare.

JAMES

Hey, look on the bright side. Holly said the guild was sending a car for us to take us to the prison. At least we'll get a little bit of luxury on the way.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ONE SEASON HOTEL

James and Eric stand in front of the hotel as an old bus pouring black exhaust smoke rolls up, with "NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY" written on the side.

ERIC  
I cannot believe this is happening.

JAMES  
Isn't it every kid's dream to ride  
in a prison bus? I know it was  
mine.

ERIC  
Not at all. A fire truck maybe. Or  
a bulldozer. But a prison bus?

JAMES  
I guess times have changed, then.

The doors of the bus creak open, and James and Eric enter.

INT. PRISON BUS

They are not the only passengers on the bus, it is filled with prisoners in red and white jumpsuits, looking like a candy cane as opposed to the standard black and white. They also have little wreaths around their wrists as handcuffs. The prisoners snarl at Eric and James as they walk to the open seat in the back of the bus. Eric is petrified as he walks among them, James is smiling ear to ear.

ERIC  
This is so-

JAMES  
Awesome.

ERIC  
Terrifying.

A prisoner swipes at Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
*Aah!*

JAMES  
Awesome.

They take their seat and the bus rumbles down the road, through the industrial district, and passes row after row of factories, billowing smoke out of smokestacks.

ERIC  
There's the factories. Definitely  
not what I was expecting.

JAMES

What were you expecting?

ERIC

Little wood shacks? Elves building wooden ducks with hammers? I don't know exactly, but not this.

The bus continues down a remote path, and arrives in front of the prison. James and Eric file out of the bus with the prisoners.

EXT. NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

They are taken past armed guards and security in Santa suit-inspired tactical gear, complete with red and green plaid bulletproof vests, gift-wrapped guns and ornament-shaped explosives on their belts. James and Eric approach the information counter at the front of the prison gate.

JAMES

Hi there, we're here to meet with Holly Jingle? We're her representatives.

PRISON WORKER

Hold on a moment. I'll get the warden.

The worker leaves for a moment and returns with a short, stocky elf, who is bald with a black beard, who exits the booth to speak to the duo. This is KANE (680).

KANE

Boys! Attention!

Eric and James snap to attention, saluting the warden.

JAMES

Sir, yes, sir!

ERIC

We're here to see-

KANE

*Did I ask you to speak, recruit?!*

ERIC

Sir, this isn't the military, we're lawyers!

KANE

Well I didn't serve in the National Gourd for 250 years to have some lawyers boss me around. When you're at my facility, you'll follow my orders. Got that?

ERIC

Sir, yes, sir.

KANE

Good. You learn quick. Name's Kane. I'm the warden here. I understand you're here to see a certain Holly Jingle?

JAMES

Yes, sir.

KANE

Quite the case, that one. I'm conflicted about her. She did a bad thing, of course, but can't say the big guy didn't have it coming. After a few thousand years- well, she'll fill you in. Follow me.

Kane leads them through the prison gate, with tinsel acting as barbed wire around the tops of the fences.

#### INT. NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

The group walks down the halls, flanked by the armed guards from earlier, passing by cells of humans and elves, and even a few reindeer behind bars.

ERIC

Excuse, me, sir, but why are there reindeer in here?

KANE

Hit an runs. We're never sure whether to count the reindeer as the vehicle or as the accomplice, depending on the judge.

ERIC

Speaking of which, we heard about a Judge Mercer on the way into town, have you heard of him?



KANE

Merciless Mercer? Of course! He's an old friend. True upstanding North Pole citizen. Cares about all the right reasons for the season. You better hope he stays far away from this case, though it's going to be hard to truly find an impartial person for this job.

They arrive at a small waiting area, and are directed to sit on a small metal bench outside of the meeting room.

JAMES

Is Holly coming?

KANE

She's on her way. You two wait here.

They sit for a minute in silence, before they hear the bells. Slowly, a jingle is heard with each step as Holly walks down the hall, still out of sight.

JAMES

I think that's our gal.

Sure enough, she turns the corner, lead by two guards, and is seen in all three feet of glory. HOLLY JINGLE (340), a female, redheaded elf, wearing the red and white prison garb with slide-on shoes with bells attached to the tops.

HOLLY

James?

JAMES

That's me.

HOLLY

We have a lot to talk about.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE ONE.

AN ACT OF ELF-LOATHING

EPISODE TWO: THE NAUGHTY LIST

Written by

Shane Joseph

INT. NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

JAMES sits across the table from HOLLY, with ERIC taking notes from a chair off to the side. The silhouette of a North Pole Security officer can be seen outside the door.

JAMES

Okay, run it by me one more time.  
Did you hit Santa before or after  
the reindeer-

HOLLY

No, no. Already wrong. *Listen.* I  
never hit him. And can we please  
call him Chris? I'm sick of this  
"Santa" glorification.

JAMES

Sorry. So you went to talk to  
Chris, and... then what?

HOLLY

I went to confront him about my  
sister.

ERIC

Ivy, right?

HOLLY

Yes. Have neither of you been  
paying attention?

ERIC

Sorry, I just want to make sure I  
have all the details right.

HOLLY

I went to confront him about Ivy,  
who worked in one of the factories  
before she... well, before the  
accident I told you about. Chris  
was already mad about something  
when I approached him, so I knew  
the conversation wouldn't be too  
productive, but I had all this rage  
I had built up from being ignored  
for multiple days straight. Soon  
enough, it escalated to a screaming  
match, and I already told you the  
rest.

JAMES

Right. The murder part.

HOLLY  
Self defense.

JAMES  
Right. Self defense by way of  
string lights.

HOLLY  
Correct.

JAMES  
Okay, this is all good stuff. Well,  
not good obviously- but you know,  
good for our case. We can probably  
argue for negligence over what  
happened to Ivy.

HOLLY  
You'll want to go down to the  
factory for that. Talk to the  
foreman. He saw the whole thing,  
and believe me, this was not a one  
time "incident".

JAMES  
Okay, well it looks like I know  
where our next stop will be. Eric,  
let's go.

Eric closes his notebook and gets up from the chair. The  
security guard opens the door and comes into the room.

ERIC  
Uh, I don't know if you're the  
person to talk to, but I heard  
there was some sort of lost and  
found here? See, my suitcase got  
stolen, and-

SECURITY GUARD  
Go to the front desk.

ERIC  
Okay, thank you, sir.

JAMES  
Holly, we'll check in at the  
factory and report back when we  
have any updates. In the meantime,  
don't go anywhere! Ha!

No one laughs at the joke, Eric puts his hands over his face.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Tough crowd.

They exit, and walk back through the halls of the prison.

ERIC  
So, what did you think?

JAMES  
What do you mean?

ERIC  
You just interviewed Santa's  
killer. What do you think I mean?

JAMES  
Oh, Holly. Right. Hard to tell as  
of now. I believe her, if that's  
what you mean. About the self  
defense thing. The more I hear  
about Santa, the more I'm starting  
to wonder.

ERIC  
Wonder what?

JAMES  
If he's quite as jolly as we've  
been lead to believe.

The TITLE SEQUENCE for the show plays.

EXT. NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

James waits outside the facility's gates, flipping through  
Eric's notebook. Eric exits the gates a few moments later,  
holding a garbage bag full of clothes.

JAMES  
Well, did you find anything good in  
the lost and found?

ERIC  
Found, yes. Good not so much. But  
it'll have to do for now.

JAMES  
Alright, I talked to the Elf  
Worker's Guild guy while you were  
in there, he's going to meet us at  
the factory and introduce us to the  
foreman.

ERIC

I gotta admit, this is kind of exciting now that I'm here in the middle of it all.

JAMES

See? Like I always say, when you work for me, adventure is just around the corner.

ERIC

Like you always say? I haven't heard you say that once.

JAMES

It's new, I'm trying to make it my "thing".

ERIC

Let's just focus on the case for now. How are we getting to the factory?

JAMES

I figure we can try out the public transportation. There's a station right near here?

ERIC

A station?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS

We see close-ups on what appear to be the wheels of a large, industrial steam train. It rattles the ground as it passes the camera, and we see the windows of the passenger cars fly by in a blur. But, as we cut to a wide shot, it is revealed that it is an elf-sized holiday train, like the ones you might see at a shopping mall display, except this train's bright colors have long faded after decades of heavy use. Eric and James are sitting on top of one of the cars, double the size of the train's other passengers.

JAMES

On second thought, I may have chosen the wrong train.

ERIC

You think?

The train comes to a screeching halt at Factory Station, a bustling train platform in the shadow of the enormous factories at the edge of the city. Eric and James get off the train one leg at a time, like getting off a horse.

JAMES

We really have not had a lot of  
luck with the transportation here.

Eric brushes snow off of his pants.

ERIC

That's an understatement.

James and Eric follow the sea of elf workers down the winding paths to the smoke-billowing factory buildings. There are at least twenty of the enormous facilities, each bearing a different type of symbol to indicate what types of toys are made there. One is for stuffed animals, one is for electronics, and so on.

ERIC (CONT'D)

So, did the guild leader say which  
factory we're meeting him at?

JAMES

Yup, the electronics building, it's  
one of the biggest factories here  
and it's where Ivy had her  
accident.

ERIC

You mean got crushed by a machine.

JAMES

Alright, I don't need all the gory  
details.

ERIC

Yes you do. You absolutely do.  
You're the lawyer.

JAMES

I'm sure I'll pick it up by the  
time the trial rolls around.

ERIC

How are you so casual about this?

JAMES

Remember when you asked me about my  
mission statement?

ERIC

Yeah, "make the most money while doing the least work", right?

JAMES

Bingo.

ERIC

You don't care about this at all? The murder of the international representation of joy and the holidays? That still warrants the minimal amount of work?

JAMES

Hey, at least I stay true to my mission.

ERIC

You're proud of that? Have some integrity.

JAMES

(snaps)

Hey! Listen, I know I may be unconventional, but I am still leading this case. You're here to take notes, got that?

ERIC

(taken aback)

Right. Yes. Sorry.

JAMES

(regretful)

I shouldn't have said that. But still, I'm in charge, okay?

ERIC

I know.

JAMES

Okay, good.

They continue walking in silence for a few moments.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Look, there's the guild leader.

As they approach the outside of the factory, an older elf, CHESTER(850s), approaches. He's a stoic elf, who's seen a lot in the field, and is dedicated to his job.



CHESTER

You must be James. I'm Chester.

JAMES

Good to meet you, Chester. This is my intern, Eric.

They all shake hands.

CHESTER

So, you're looking for a tour of the facility?

JAMES

Yes, I've heard a lot about the dangerous conditions of the factories, and I'm sure you can't comment on that, but we-

CHESTER

These places are death traps!

JAMES

Oh, so you can comment.

CHESTER

I sure can. Not that anyone would listen, but I can sure as heck comment. No one cares about us, we're just seen as tools. The rest of the city gets most of the year off, but we are working away all year long.

ERIC

Wow, all year? I thought the city only worked in December.

CHESTER

Most of the city, yes, since tourism kicks up around that time. But you think it's easy making toys for every single child in the world in just one month? It's hardly possible with all twelve, we barely make the cutoff in time every year.

JAMES

And is it still possible for us to speak to the foreman?

CHESTER

Yeah, you'll meet him at the end of the tour.

(MORE)

CHESTER (CONT'D)

Frank's a hard worker, cares about his staff. But with a production this big, things are bound to slip through the cracks. Government hasn't cared about us in centuries, so the foremen are left picking up the slack, but there's just getting to be too much.

JAMES

Alright, well, let's go take a look.

Chester leads James and Eric through the massive entrance to the factory.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

The inside of the factory is an absolutely massive floor, with conveyor belts and assembly lines zipping back and forth through the entire building. Elves rush to and fro grabbing things from the conveyor belt, pushing large carts, and scanning bar codes. Think of an Amazon warehouse, but filled with elves.

ERIC

Woah, it's hot in here.

JAMES

Kind of a nice break from the cold weather, actually.

CHESTER

Oh, just wait. Typical temp in here stays at about 80 degrees, but with all the running around and standing by hot equipment, we have dozens of elves pass out every day.

JAMES

Okay, can you walk us through a little bit about the factory?

CHESTER

In the old days, all this stuff used to be done by hand. Hundreds and hundreds of years, actually. I've been here for a lot of them. Things were better back then, it only started getting bad about a century ago. People started pushing for more automation, faster products, and we couldn't keep up.

(MORE)

CHESTER (CONT'D)

Then these factories went up and it's never been the same since. It's all about speed now, and efficiency. No matter what the cost. It's a damn shame.

ERIC

Wow, what a tragedy.

JAMES

Oh, absolutely. Tragedy. Can you maybe repeat that? I was paying attention, I just maybe need to hear it one more time.

CHESTER

What?

ERIC

Nothing, he- he's joking. Can you talk about what happened with Ivy?

CHESTER

Real sad stuff there. Though unfortunately not uncommon, like I said. She was working on the line, doing some maintenance to the conveyer, then, well, long story short, the conveyer turned on when it shouldn't have, and Ivy became... part of the line.

ERIC

I'm so sorry.

JAMES

Yuck- I'm sorry.

CHESTER

Alright, let's go talk to Frank. He'll be able to tell you more of the details, I just run the guild so I deal with all the union business and such.

Chester takes them up some stairs, to an elevated platform above the factory floor where there are a few rooms, including Frank's office.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - DAY

The group walks into Frank's office, a cramped cubicle type space with various papers and certifications hanging up on the walls. Large windows are on every wall of the office, allowing a clear view of everything in the factory.

Frank (500s), sits at his desk, watching the North Pole News Network on a fuzzy 2000s era TV.

CHESTER

Frank, this is James. He's the one I was telling you about, the one helping Holly.

FRANK

Welcome, James. I'm Frank, the foreman here. Glad to hear you're helping Holly with her... situation. Chester hasn't told me exactly what happened, but I know it has something to do with the conditions here, and that means I'm automatically on board.

JAMES

Well, that's good to hear because she-

Eric elbows James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Let's just say she's going to need all the help she can get. Do you remember what exactly happened with her sister, Amy?

FRANK

Ivy?

JAMES

That's what I said.

FRANK

You said Amy.

JAMES

Must be the accent.

FRANK

Anyways, yes, Ivy was one of our hardest workers, it's a real shame. She was so young. I think-

They are interrupted by a breaking news alert on Frank's TV.

REPORTER

(on TV)

This is Carol Nutmeg bringing you a breaking news special report from NPNN.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

We take you live now to a press conference held by Mrs. Claus herself.

Eric and James exchange a sudden look of horror.

ERIC

James, we should go. Now.

JAMES

I-

FRANK

Huh? What's going on? I can turn the TV off if you would rather-

The image on the TV goes to the news conference, where Mrs. Claus stands at a gingerbread podium holding a candy cane microphone.

MRS. CLAUS

(on TV)

Esteemed colleagues, members of the press, and citizens of the world at large. It is with the utmost heartbreak that I bring you this news. My husband, Chris Kringle, Santa Claus...

ERIC

James. Let's go.

MRS. CLAUS

...as of only a few short days ago, was found...

All the elves in the factory have stopped working and are all looking at TVs around the facility.

ERIC

*Please.*

MRS. CLAUS

...dead behind the reindeer stables of our estate.

FRANK

Wh-what?!

MRS. CLAUS

I wish that I could say he passed peacefully of natural causes, but no. This was foul play. A calculated attack. A *murder*.

FRANK

No. How- who-

JAMES

Eric, start running. Go.

ERIC

But James-

JAMES

Go! I'll meet you at the hotel.

James pushes Eric towards the door, he starts to leave, but lingers, and watches the TV through the office window.

MRS. CLAUS

The murder is still at large, and while I shouldn't even be saying this, it is my duty to this fair city, and the world at large to tell you we know the identity of the killer. She was one of our own. An elf. *And her name was Holly Jingle.*

The entire factory erupts into chaos. The machines all simultaneously grind to a halt. Elves run around, pushing over shelves and ramming carts into each other. Alarms ring, and red strobe lights flash throughout the facility. The main lights go out, leaving patches of darkness in between the red strobes.

JAMES

(calling out)

Eric!

FRANK

You knew, didn't you?! How dare you come in here-

Frank pushes Chester aside and lunges at James, who jumps out of the way, and Frank goes flying through the window, smashing it, and landing on the catwalk. James runs down the stairs to try and find Eric, but there are so many elves running around, pushing in every direction in a mad rush. Between that and the darkness, finding Eric is proving to be an almost impossible task.

JAMES

Eric! Eric!

FRANK

(from the balcony)

Hey!

JAMES

Frank! Why are you upset? I thought you cared about your employees.

FRANK

Yeah, I do! Just not when they turn out to be murderers! Speaking of which...

Frank holds the TV from his office over his head and heaves it over the balcony.

JAMES

Wait, wait, wait-!

The corner clips James' head, and everything goes black.

INT. FACTORY - LATER

James' eyes slowly open, and he looks around the factory. There are no more elves in the building, and the entire place is in shambles. The machines that are still upright are all smoking and sparking, the conveyer belts are smashed and ripped up, and wires dangle from the ceiling.

JAMES

Ow.

Frank holds his head where the TV hit it, and a pretty sizable bump now appears. He surveys the area, taking inventory of all the damage.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh boy.

He stands up, then the full memories come rushing back to him in a moment of realization.

JAMES (CONT'D)

*Eric.*

James tries to call Eric on his cell phone, but no answer. He hangs up and calls Chester.

CHESTER

(on phone)

Hello?

JAMES

Chester! This is James!

CHESTER

James, what happened?

JAMES

What do you think? Frank tried to kill me.

CHESTER

Oh yeah, that.

JAMES

Listen, is Eric with you?

CHESTER

No, I thought he left before you did.

JAMES

I told him to, but I have a feeling he stuck around. But now I'm worried.

CHESTER

A few of the elves were roaming around outside when I got out, waiting to salvage the place, maybe ask one of them.

JAMES

I will do that. Thank you Chester.

CHESTER

No problem. Oh, and James?

JAMES

Yeah?

CHESTER

Be careful out there. Things are... crazy right now. You may want to lay low.

JAMES

Not until I find Eric.

James hangs up and rushes to exit the building.

EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT

A group of elves huddle around the factory door, warming themselves over a fire burning inside of a box of toys.

JAMES

Uh, excuse me?

An older elf, COAL, walks up to James.



COAL

What do you want?

JAMES

I was just wondering if you saw someone leave the building before the, uh, excitement started.

COAL

We saw a lot of someones. Got anyone specific in mind?

JAMES

Well, a human, little shorter than me, kind of lanky.

COAL

Think I saw him. Someone was throwin' him into the back of a truck.

JAMES

Okay, thank you- wait, *what?!*

COAL

Good luck, pal.  
(to the other elves)  
Let's go, boys.

They all leave the fire and go into the factory, dragging toboggans that are already carrying some electronics and other things they've looted.

JAMES

Wait, what truck? What do you mean?  
Where did you see him?

The door has already closed behind the elves. James runs up to it, but it's now locked.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Agh! How am I ever going to find him now?

James kicks a rock in frustration, it flies in the air and lands in between a set of tire tracks, peeling out down a hill and into the distance from the factory entrance.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well that was a freebie. Now, how to get down there?

He tries to walk a few steps down the hill, but almost slips, and quickly returns to the top. He then glances back towards the fire, and at one of the toboggans.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hm.

CUT TO:

EXT. FACTORY HILL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

James stands on the top of the hill, with the toboggan at his feet. It becomes clear that he intends on going down the hill using the toboggan as a snowboard instead of a sled for some reason.

JAMES

Here goes nothing.

James pushes off with his foot, and his other leg immediately smashes through the top of the toboggan, causing him to tumble head over heels down the top of the hill, exclaiming every time he flips over and hits the ground.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ow! Ow! Ow!

Finally, he manages to turn the toboggan upright, even though one of his legs is still punctured through the top of the sled. Slaloming around trees and rocks, James does his best to stay in line between the tire tracks. After sliding down to the very bottom of the hill, James sleds off of a ramp of snow, where his leg is freed from the toboggan in mid-air.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Yes!

(looks down at the ground)

No, no no!

James falls into a snowbank below, his fall cushioned by the snow.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, that could have been worse.

The toboggan comes crashing down onto him, his head now sticking through the hole where his leg was.

EXT. SNOWY FOREST - NIGHT - LATER

James discards the sled from around his neck as he trudges down the path, still following the tracks.

Finally, a warm light shines in his general direction. He looks up at it and sees a dilapidated cabin in the distance. He runs towards the cabin, and sees a beat-up pickup truck parked in front of the house, at the end of the tire tracks.

JAMES

Okay, this is it.

James picks up a sizable stick from the ground and shakes the snow off of it. He then holds it up in self defense and slowly approaches the door, listening for any sounds he can. He inches around the corner and holds the stick at the ready, and prepares to kick down the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

One...two... three!

He kicks down the flimsy wooden door and rushes into the house to find Eric sitting at a table drinking hot chocolate across from a middle aged MAN with white spiked hair. Both the man and Eric jump, spilling their drinks, the man stands up and grabs a chair to defend himself, and goes to hit James.

ERIC

Woah, woah, woah! Stop! Both of you.

Eric and the man slowly lower their makeshift weapons.

JAMES

Eric! You're okay!

ERIC

Yeah, I'm fine.

James gives Eric a big hug.

JAMES

You weren't answering your phone!

ERIC

Oh, sorry. I must've left it in the truck when Jack picked me up.

JAMES

Jack?

ERIC

Oh, right. James, meet Jack.

The man extends his hand cautiously towards James.

JACK

Hi, James. I'm Jack. Jack Frost.

JAMES

Oh boy.

ERIC

Jack here saved me. Right as the riot broke out, he scooped me up and put me in his truck. We had to fight off a few scrappy elves, but I think we did a decent job.

JACK

Eric here is quite the fighter.

JAMES

Really?

JACK

You'd be surprised.

JAMES

I am surprised.

ERIC

From a certain point of view, it probably looked like Jack was kidnapping me.

They both share a hearty laugh, but James doesn't join in.

JAMES

I'm still confused. Why did you pick up Eric?

JACK

I heard some humans were new in town sniffing around the factory, so I figured I would come down and check things out. Given what happened to Chris...

JAMES

Wait, you knew about the murder? How?

ERIC

You're going to want to sit down for this.

JAMES

What? Why?

They all take a seat around the table.

JACK  
I knew what happened to Chris  
because, well, because I was there.

JAMES  
When he was murdered?

JACK  
Yeah.

JAMES  
How come?

JACK  
I was there to meet Chris.

JAMES  
You two were friends, then?

JACK  
Well, not just friends...

JAMES  
No. Freaking. Way.

JACK  
Look, after a thousand years, you  
can't blame the guy for getting  
bored. I can tell you about some  
much worse things Chris has done.

JAMES  
Oh, please do.

JACK  
Well, I think the-

They are interrupted by a Christmas ornament flying in  
through the open doorway, and landing on the floor under the  
table.

ERIC  
What the-

The Christmas ornament begins seeping smoke.

JACK  
*Everybody get down!*

They all jump away from the table, and the ornament bomb  
EXPLODES, filling the screen with fire before we...

CUT TO BLACK.

AN ACT OF ELF-LOATHING  
EPISODE THREE: CLAUS EXAMINATION

Written by  
Shane Joseph

INT. NORTH POLE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY CELL - NIGHT

FADE IN:

JAMES, ERIC, and JACK lie on the floor of one of the jail cells, unconscious and covered in soot. Eric wakes up first, slowly tries to stand, holding on to the wall for support.

ERIC

What... happened?

Eric slowly looks up and one of the North Pole Security officers bangs on the jail bars with the butt of his gift-wrapped gun.

SECURITY

*No talking!*

The noise wakes up James and Jack, who startle awake, James knocks his head on the top of one of the bunk beds and goes unconscious again. Jack turns to Eric.

JACK

What's going on?

ERIC

I-

The officer bangs the bars again.

SECURITY

I said *no talking!*

JACK

How was I supposed to hear you? I was asleep.

The officer looks confused. It's a good point.

SECURITY

Well... you heard me now!

JACK

Can I at least ask some questions?

SECURITY

No!

JACK

So we just sit in here.

SECURITY

Yes!



JACK

Whatever.

The officer looks mad and bangs his gun against the cell again. James jolts up again, and is about to hit his head on the bunk again, but Jack catches him before he does.

JAMES

What...

JACK

Don't ask.

SECURITY

No talking!

ERIC

Here we go again.

More officers walk down the hall, escorting KANE, the militant warden elf from the first episode.

KANE

Well, well, well. At attention boys!

The officers stop walking and stand at attention. Kane walks a few feet before realizing the officers have stopped.

KANE (CONT'D)

Not you, you idiots!

The guards stop saluting and jog to catch up with Kane.

KANE (CONT'D)

I was talking to *them*!

The guys in the cell approach the bars and look out at Kane.

KANE (CONT'D)

Well? What do you have to say for yourselves?

They don't answer.

KANE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you?

ERIC

We, uh, we were told not to speak.

KANE

By who?

ERIC

That guy.

He points at the guard who kept yelling at them.

KANE

Why did you tell them not to speak?  
No one told you to do that.

The security guy shrugs.

JAMES

Jeez, who's running this place?

KANE

I am, you dolt! You don't remember?  
Now answer my question. What.  
Happened?

ERIC

Well, we were at the factory doing  
some research for the trial, and  
all of a sudden this riot broke out  
when they realized... when Mrs.  
Claus made the announcement.

KANE

Riot, eh? You're sure you had  
nothing to do with this "riot"?

JAMES

Of course not! Eric ran off  
actually, and I bravely stayed  
behind.

ERIC

You made me go!

JAMES

Details, details.

ERIC

Anyway, I barely made it out alive,  
before Jack here saved me.

KANE

Jack, eh? And you knew nothing  
about this "Jack"?

ERIC

No, besides the fact that he saved  
me.

KANE  
 Saved, eh? You think you were  
 "saved?"

JAMES  
 I think you may be stuck on repeat,  
 sir.

KANE  
 Cut the crap! Get real with me!

ERIC  
 I am being real! He saved my life!

KANE  
 I guess he didn't give you a  
 history lesson, huh?

JACK  
 Alright, that's enough.

KANE  
 Hey! I decide when it's enough.  
 Jack here was there at the scene of  
 the crime!

JAMES  
 We know.

KANE  
 Wait, what?

ERIC  
 Yeah, he told us like two seconds  
 before you busted in and almost  
 blew us up.

KANE  
 Really? Damn! I thought I had a mic  
 drop moment.

JAMES  
 Sorry to burst your bubble.

KANE  
 Look, all we need is an  
 explanation.

ERIC  
 About what?

KANE

What do you think?! About why you were with Jack and why he was at the scene of the crime.

ERIC

Well, as to why we were there, we already told you. He saved my life and then James came and found me-

JAMES

Quite heroically I might add.

ERIC

Right. And as far as the reason Jack was at the scene of the crime, well, that's for him to say.

Kane takes a minute to think about it.

KANE

Alright, I guess I buy it. You two can come out here. But Jack stays. We have a few more questions.

JAMES

Perfect!

JACK

What? You're just throwing me under the bus?

JAMES

We'll see you later. We have some stuff to do.

JACK

Typical.

KANE

Well, you have your work cut out for you. While you three were taking your little cat nap, a court date was set for the trial.

ERIC

*What?*

JAMES

When?

KANE

Oh, just... two days from now.

JAMES  
You're kidding.

KANE  
I never kid! Now are you coming out  
of there are not?

The cell opens, Eric and James leave, and Jack stays behind.  
James turns to Kane.

JAMES  
Alright, we need to talk to Holly.

KANE  
You're in no position to be making  
demands!  
(pause)  
Follow me.

They follow him along the halls, back to the interrogation  
room, where Holly is already seated.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

JAMES  
Holly! What are you doing here?

HOLLY  
They've kept me here since Mrs.  
Claus' press conference. Said it  
was for my own protection. Which is  
probably true. I heard what  
happened at the factory.

ERIC  
It was terrifying.

JAMES  
Eh, it wasn't that bad.

ERIC  
Anyway, how are you doing? We need  
to prep you for the trial.

HOLLY  
Am I your only witness?

ERIC  
Yeah, this guy Jack. But that  
warden guy is currently grilling  
him.

HOLLY

Great. Anyone else who isn't under criminal investigation?

JAMES

I have a few ideas.

ERIC

What? Who? You didn't tell me about anyone else.

JAMES

You're going to have to trust me eventually.

ERIC

Alright, then you'll need to trust me too.

JAMES

Meaning?

ERIC

While you go out and get these mystery witnesses, I'll prepare with Holly.

JAMES

Eric, I appreciate your help, and I get you want to have more responsibility-

ERIC

Then let me have it!

James stops. He's impressed and surprised at Eric's sudden confidence.

JAMES

Alright. Deal. You stay here, I'll arrange for Jack to join you once the warden is through with him.

ERIC

Okay. Let's get to work.

MONTAGE: GETTING TO WORK

Eric has turned the wall behind Holly into a white board with erasable paper and pens, and has begun to create a sequence of events from the night Holly killed Santa. He draws a storyboard with drawing of Holly at each stage of the night.

James is seen leaving the prison and getting into a sleigh with the driver from episode one.

Jack has joined Holly and Eric now, and helps fill in parts of the scene. Eric goes back and adds Jack in the corners of the Holly drawings where he was hiding the night of behind the reindeer stables. As the camera zooms into one of the drawings of the stables, it fades into the real view of the stables, where...

James enters the frame, and talks to the reindeer handler, RANDY DUNCE. We can't hear what they're saying, but Randy shakes his head and James walks away dejectedly.

In the interrogation room, Eric has turned it into a mock courtroom, with Holly on the witness stand, and he talks to her holding his notepad, consulting it every few moments.

James is back at the factory, where elf construction crews work on reconstructing the facility. He talks to the foreman in the midst of the construction.

Eric talks to Jack who is now on the stand, he takes the role of the prosecution, asking him leading questions and talking a bit more aggressively.

James is now at a different location, where a huge sleigh sits up in a maintenance bay, and an elf slides out from under it, overalls covered in grease. He shakes James' hand, and they exit frame in conversation.

Holly is back on the witness stand now, and Eric is looking much more confident, pacing and pausing while asking questions, the camera pans down to the notebook, which sits on a table, showing Eric doesn't need it anymore.

James enters the room, sees this, and smiles. He brings in the guild leader, Chester, and his new witness, the sleigh mechanic.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

James and Eric wake up at the same time.

JAMES

You up?

ERIC

Sure am.

JAMES  
You ready for this?

ERIC  
I'm not sure.

JAMES  
Hey. I've known you for just about  
a week now, and it's been just  
about the craziest week of my life.

ERIC  
Yeah, mine too.

JAMES  
But through this week, I've seen  
you go from a tightly wound,  
submissive, goody two shoes-

ERIC  
Hey!

JAMES  
-But now, you're a more confident,  
slightly less tightly wound,  
responsible worker. But not just a  
worker. A *partner*.

ERIC  
James-

Eric sits and stares for a second, then jumps up and hugs  
James.

JAMES  
Okay. We're hugging now.

Eric lets go, wipes his eye, and stands up straight.

ERIC  
Alright. Let's get an elf acquitted  
for murder.  
(pause)  
Never thought I'd say that, but  
here we go.

EXT. ONE SEASON HOTEL

Eric and James exit the hotel, and get into the waiting  
sleigh/limo, a black sleigh with a covered roof and tinted  
windows. It pulls out of the lot, and past protesters holding  
picket signs that say "Kill yours-elf", "Put a stocking in  
it", and other mean, yet surprisingly clever, insults.



ERIC  
Well, that's comforting.

JAMES  
You'll get used to it.

ERIC  
Do you want to go over the notes  
one more time?

JAMES  
No, I got it. And you should stop  
stressing. You know this. You know  
you know this.

ERIC  
I know, I know.

JAMES  
Exactly.

ERIC  
Do you know who the prosecutor is?

JAMES  
Unfortunately, yes. Mara Stone.  
She's a smart lawyer, we went to a  
few seminars together, and she's a  
hell of a cross examiner.

ERIC  
Well, I'm ready for it.

JAMES  
That's the spirit.

The limo stops in front of the courthouse, with its candy  
cane columns and Lady Justice statue wearing a Santa hat.  
James and Eric step out, and enter the building, past more  
protesters, some still insulting, but some, mostly Elf  
Workers Guild members, defending Holly.

#### INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY

Holly is already seated on a bench outside the courtroom,  
with the wreath handcuffs on, surrounded by North Pole  
Security Guards.

JAMES  
Well, how you feeling?

HOLLY  
How the hell do you think?

JAMES  
Stupid question.

HOLLY  
Sorry. Nerves. Yeah, I'm ready.

JAMES  
Good. We built a solid case here.  
We have some reliable witnesses,  
but our way in to the jury is you.

ERIC  
No pressure or anything though.

HOLLY  
Right. No pressure.

JAMES  
We'll win. I know we will.

HOLLY  
We better. Or the entire Guild will  
beat you with so many candy canes  
you'll have a hard time telling the  
red and white apart from all your  
black and blues.

JAMES  
That's reassuring.

The bailiff sticks his head out of the courtroom doors.

BAILIFF  
You people ready?

ERIC  
Oh, we're ready.

BAILIFF  
Whatever you say, small fry.

Eric goes to respond, but James grabs his arm and shakes his head. They open the doors and enter the courtroom, Holly is escorted in behind them.

INT. COURTROOM

As the trio walks through the crowd gathered on the benches, they are met with a lot of dirty looks. The factory foreman, FRANK, is in the crowd, as well as MRS.CLAUS, and their sleigh driver with the DUI, PHIL, who gives them a thumbs up as they pass. They take a seat at their table, and the jury enters into their box.

ERIC  
Any tips on the jury?

JAMES  
A lot of younger people, non-religious mostly would be my guess. But it's hard to find someone with a truly unbiased opinion when it comes to Jolly Old Saint Nick himself.

The bailiff stands.

BAILIFF  
All rise for the honorable Judge Mercer.

ERIC  
(quietly)  
*Merciless Mercer?*

JAMES  
Of course.

JUDGE MERCER, (60s), enters, and takes a seat at the bench.

MERCER  
Please be seated. The trial of Claus Estate v. Holly Jingle is now in session. Prosecution may give their opening statement when ready.

MARA STONE, (40s), the prosecutor, stands up and approaches the jury box.

ERIC  
Here we go.

MARA  
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my name is Mara. Let's cut right to the chase. I'm sure you're all a little worried about what's going to happen here today. That's normal, you all will be the voice of the world when it comes to this international tragedy. It's a lot of responsibility, isn't it?

Some of the jury members nod in agreement.

ERIC  
Mara's already got them playing right into her hand!

MARA

Well, I'm here to tell you that you don't need to be worried. There's no need, because this case is very simple. The evidence that I am about to show you will prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that on that chilly night, behind the reindeer stables of the North Pole, that elf that you see sitting right there, Holly Jingle, killed Chris Kringle. Killed Santa Claus. With her bare hands and a string of holiday lights hanging from the top of the stable. She took it upon herself to speak for a whole group of elves, and with one rash decision, one selfish moment, not only murdered Mr. Kringle, but killed the worldwide representation of cheer and happiness. Now, the opposition will try to tell you it was self defense, that it was an act of protection, rather than the savage slaughter that it was. I say, make your own decision. But before you let yourself be deceived by the lies of this killer and her people, look inside your heart, and I think you'll hear more than a bell ring. You'll hear an alarm scream. And it's screaming for you to do the right thing. Thank you.

The jury looks amongst each other, as does the crowd.

ERIC

Oh, boy.

JAMES

You know, maybe this whole thing was a bad idea. Maybe I shouldn't have come here, brought you into this-

MERCER

Defense? Your opening?

JAMES

Of course, your honor. On the way.

ERIC

You got this.

James stands up, taking his padfolio, walking a few steps, then decides he doesn't need it, and plops it back onto the table. It makes an obnoxious noise that rattles through the silent courtroom.

JAMES

Sorry about that folks.

He makes his way to the jury box.

ERIC

Oh, boy.

JAMES

Ladies and gentlemen, have you ever had a role model that turned out to not be exactly who you thought they were? Maybe a teacher that turned out to be pretty mean, or a celebrity who seemed like the nicest guy on all the talk shows, but it turns out they made a pass half of the camera people in the studio? Well, I take no pleasure in telling you that Chris Kringle was one of those men. Chris was a perfect example of the subject of an echo chamber. One day out of the year, he bribes you with toys and gifts, and then he expects everyone to revere him like the God that he has somehow overshadowed at this time of year. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I am here to pull back the curtain. Because quite frankly, you would be shocked what he was doing the other 364. Thank you.

James makes his way back to the defense table.

ERIC

That was great!

HOLLY

Nice one.

JAMES

Thanks. Not a perfect delivery, but I think I got through to them.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I can see one young woman was at least intrigued, and the older guy on the left leaned forward when I said the line about overshadowing God, so maybe we have a few religious folks in here after all. But now the true test begins.

MERCER

Prosecution, call your first witness.

MARA

Your honor, the defense calls Randy Dunce to the stand.

After she says this, the stable worker we saw in the montage approaches the witness stand.

JAMES

I tried to get him for our side, but Mara got to him first. Pay attention though, Randy is... quite the character. There may be some things we can use.

Mara approaches the witness stand. Randy takes a seat, his overalls are stained with dirt and oil, and he is wearing some sort of mechanic's jumpsuit under his overalls.

MARA

Mr. Dunce, thank you for speaking to me today. Could you please state your occupation for the court?

RANDY

Well, I'm the reindeer handler around here. I take care of the deers and do the required maintenance on the sleigh. Well, I *did* do the maintenance. I'm not quite sure what I'll be getting up to now that, you know...

MARA

Thank you Mr. Dunce. That brings us to the night in question. What did you see on the night Santa was killed?

RANDY

Well, we was gettin' ready for the big week, of course. Christmas time is always go, go, go at the Pole.

(MORE)

RANDY (CONT'D)

So, I was doing my typical routine, giving the 'deer their food. Reindeer, that is. We call 'em "deer" because it's just shorter and fits with the lingo, you know, helps to expedite the process-

MARA

Er, yes, and after that...?

RANDY

Oh, yeah, okay. So, turns out that Blitzen had some sort of stomach bug or something because he was shittin' like a maniac, those carrots were runnin' through him like Mrs. Claus' chocolate fudge sauce. I'm serious, this was like a Jackson Pollock-

MARA

Mr. Dunce?

RANDY

Right, so, bottom line is, it's messy. So, I head back behind the stalls to get my cleanup kit, and as I'm walking back, I hear this struggle. I can hear Chris yelling, which he almost never does, but then I hear this other voice cursing him out. Then, I heard this crash, the stable lights flickered, and I heard Chris cry out. So, I walk back slowly, peeking around the corner, and see that elf there, Holly, strangling Chris with the string lights we have hanging from the roof. This is intense, Godfather type stuff. Mafia shit, you know. Really shook me up.

MARA

Thank you, Randy. I'm sure retelling that can't have been easy for you.

RANDY

Oh, well, I don't mind, it's actually the most attention I've gotten in years!

MARA

Thank you Randy.

MERCER

Defense?

Mara returns to her table, it's James' turn to cross examine. He gets up, grabbing the padfolio for real this time, and approaches the stand.

JAMES

Thank you for being here today, Randy, I just have a few questions for you, and then you can get back to doing... whatever it is you do the rest of the year. Now, on the night in question, you said you were very busy, correct?

RANDY

Yes, sir.

JAMES

Right, so you were going back and forth behind the stables to get things, do tasks and so on?

RANDY

Oh, well, not really, I was pretty occupied with that Blitzen thing I talked about.

JAMES

Yes, the defecating. So, until you had to go back and get the cleaning supplies, you hadn't been to the back of the stables for a while, is that right?

RANDY

That's right.

JAMES

And this... Blitzen situation. While this was happening, could you hear much else going on?

RANDY

Oh, no sir. Let me tell you, this was a loud affair. I don't know if you've ever stood behind a reindeer with an upset stomach, but when they get going there's this awful sound, that you won't soon forget.



JAMES

Okay, so, by your own admission, you could not see or hear anything going on behind the stable for several minutes before you walked back there. So, is it possible that Mr. Kringle could have made a move at Holly before you walked into the incident?

RANDY

Uh, well, yeah, I guess that could have happened. Shoot, did it?

JAMES

Yes, Mr. Dunce. Yes, it did. No further questions, your honor.

James returns to his table. Eric gives him a high five.

ERIC

That was amazing!

JAMES

Well, get ready, the fun is just beginning.

HOLLY

Oh, boy.

MONTAGE: TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

As time speed by, we see the other witnesses take the stand.

Mara calls a slew of mall Santas who talk about how they're out of a job and how Santa provided for their livelihood.

James calls the sleigh maintenance worker, who talks about how Santa would drink and drive the sleigh, returning it in shambles each night.

Mara calls Ebenezer Scrooge, who testifies about how Christmas turned his life around.

James calls Chester, the guild leader, who talks about Holly's sister and the terrible conditions in the factory.

Mara calls Mrs. Claus, her star witness, who, through tears, talks about the family legacy.

But now, it's time for the defense's star witness. Or witness.

END OF MONTAGE.

James returns to the table, and elbows Eric.

JAMES  
Alright, buddy, you're up.

ERIC  
Wait, what?

MERCER  
Defense? Your final witness?

JAMES  
You're the one who prepped him. I trust you.

Eric stands up.

ERIC  
You honor-

His voice cracks on the last syllable. He clears his throat and tries again.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Your honor, the defense calls Jacob Frost to the stand.

Jack walks in looking more tired than the last time we saw him, but still well put together. He is wearing a smart blue pinstripe suit, and his white hair styled with as much hair gel as usual.

JACK  
(quiet)  
Hey, kid. Ready?

Eric nods. Jack takes the stand, and Eric begins.

ERIC  
Good afternoon, Mr. Frost, Jack, and thank you for being here. Can you please explain to the court your relationship with Mr. Claus?

JACK  
Well... it's complicated.

JAMES  
And here we go.

JACK

Chris and I had been friends for a while, but it was about a year ago when we really started to get... close. We were at ChristmasCon in New Jersey signing autographs for fans in this swanky hotel, and well, after the autograph session, Chris and I got to talking at the hotel bar. I think we were both a little tipsy on the spiked hot chocolate, because we ended up going back up to my room after, and let's just say we weren't just eating milk and cookies up there.

I hear the crowd gasp, and Mrs. Claus lets out a yelp.

ERIC

Well, Jack, thank you for your bravery in sharing that. What happened after that?

JACK

Chris and I stayed in close contact after that, and we would get together to 'see each other' about once or twice a month. On the night he was killed, we were actually supposed to meet, that's what Chris was doing behind the reindeer stables. But when I was walking up to see him, I saw Holly coming from the workshop.

I ducked behind Chris' sleigh and watched the scene unfold. Holly went up to Chris and confronted him about something that had happened in the workshop, what we now know to be Holly's sister. I couldn't see that well, but I could see just fine, and I saw Chris checking his watch the whole time he was talking to Holly. He was obviously waiting for me, because when we meet, we have a very small window of time, and I could see he was getting anxious that Holly was taking up his time. After another few minutes of him trying to get Holly to walk away, he got mad. He started raising his voice, and when Holly reciprocated, he responded with a slap.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Now, as you can see, Holly is tiny, so this really hurt her. Holly got up, and confronted Chris, but he hit her again and told her to leave. That's when Holly exploded, started yelling about the conditions the elves have to go through, and how they get no healthcare, yada yada. Then, she grabbed the lights and went to town on Chris. I wanted to intervene, but Holly was clearly pissed, and I didn't want to get hurt too. I loved Chris, and while I can't forgive Holly for doing what she did, Chris clearly started it. And all because he wanted his time with me. Isn't that romantic?

Eric smiles. He knows everything has gone according to plan.

ERIC

Yes, indeed it is, Jack. That is all.

Eric returns to his seat, and gets a hug from James and Holly. The reporters in the crowd are having a field day, writing like crazy on their notepads, they all can't wait to have the story of the year in their headlines the next day. After this, Mara doesn't even bother to cross. The jury goes to deliberate. Time passes as the crowd and the lawyers sit in worried silence. Then, the lead juror enters back into the room.

LEAD JUROR

Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached a verdict. We, the jury, find Holly Jingle...  
(dramatic pause)  
Not guilty.

The crowd erupts. It's chaos. Eric, James, Jack and Holly all embrace each other.

MARA

How is that possible? She herself admitted she did it.

LEAD JUROR

Oh, sorry. I should've been more specific. Not guilty on most of the charges. All the big ones. She's getting six months in anger management.

Mara storms out, and the party continues. Mrs. Claus exits in shame, the reporters rush to interview the defense, the Guild gives James a big check.

CHESTER

You know, with the big man gone,  
we'll need someone to take his  
place. Not his exact place,  
obviously, but running the  
operations around here.

JAMES

Well, good luck with that!

James goes to leave.

CHESTER

Yeah, we need someone responsible  
yet boyish, someone the guild has a  
good relationship with, someone who  
feels like they haven't really  
found their calling yet, and  
someone who has recently learned he  
may be more of a leader than he  
thought.

JAMES

Like I said, good luck-

Eric elbows him.

ERIC

James.

JAMES

Oh. Wait.

James points at himself sheepishly. Chester nods.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Do you guys get Diet Dr. Pepper up  
here?

CHESTER

I believe we do.

JAMES

Then I'm in. Under one condition.

CHESTER

Name it.

JAMES

I'll probably need my own personal lawyer. Someone young, eager to follow their passion for law under their own roof instead of their parents, someone- oh, forget it, I'm not good at this. Eric, you in?

Eric smiles.

ERIC

Let's do this.

CUT TO BLACK.